

Message Text

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67

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 DRC-01 /137 W

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1783

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: OFF CYCLE ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS

1. ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD NOVEMBER 18-19 IN THE SPECIAL REGION OF TRENTINO-ALTO ADIGE, (AUSTRIAN BORDER), THE PO VALLEY PROVINCE OF RAVENNA, AND IN 217 SCATTERED COMMUNES. THE ONLY IMPORTANT COMMUNES VOTING ARE THE PROVINCIAL CAPITALS OF ANCONA, BELLUNO, RAVENNA AND SIENA, ALL IN NORTH OR NORTH CENTRAL ITALY. OF THE 218 COMMUNES, ONLY 100 ARE LARGE ENOUGH (I.E. POPULATIONS OF OVER 5,000) TO UTILIZE THE PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION SYSTEM EMPLOYED IN PROVINCIAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ELECTIONS. LESS THAN TWO MILLION VOTERS WILL PARTICIPATE NATIONWIDE, ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF THE ENTIRE NATIONAL ELECTORATE.

2. LOCAL ISSUES AND PERSONALITIES INVARIABLY PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN ADMINISTRATIVE ELECTIONS OF THIS TYPE. MOREOVER, IN THIS INSTANCE THE NARROWNESS OF THE SAMPLING AND ITS GEOGRAPHIC CONCENTRATION IN THE NORTH DIMINISH THE SIGNIFICANCE WHICH LOGICALLY COULD BE ACCORDED THE RESULTS. NONETHELESS, ANY MAJOR VARIATION IN USUALLY STABLE ELECTORAL PATTERNS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY BE TAKEN AS AN INDICATOR OF POPULAR SENTIMENT TOWARD THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND ITS COMPONENT PARTIES. THEREFORE, MAJOR PARTY BIG SHOTS (FANFANI, DE MARTINO, LA MALFA, BERLINGUER, ETC.) ARE ACTIVELY STUMPING IN THE AREAS INVOLVED, EXPOSING

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LOCAL ELECTORATES TO MORE ATTENTION THAN THEY NORMALLY WOULD

RECEIVE IN A BROADER CONTEST. VOLPE

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